OUR DEFENCE

by

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It certainly is heartening to read in the papers the statements our leaders make in our Parliament and in public that we are fully prepared to meet any threats on our Country's Borders. We are told that we are raising an army of 8,25,000 fully equipped with the latest weapons and have an Air Force build up of fortyfive squadron of the latest Supersonic type. The laymen, including some legislators too, in "defence matters" feel very elated and comforted to hear these reassuring guarantees given by some of our leaders, not knowing in the slightest bit of the big defence build up to meet the Chinese threat to our security. Incidentally, our Navy is also to be brought up to modern standards to face any threat to us on our Sea frontiers, which threats seem to be nearing 'reality' - from what we have heard of the fleet of Submarines China has -of the Communists naval craft gifted to one of our erstwhile friendly Asian countries - of the reported appearance of an unidentified Submarine in the Bay of Bengal and of the efforts of a Chinese Ship trying in vain to call at Minicoy, an important island in the group of our Laccadive Islands in the Arabian Sea. These are all signs of things to come - as were the visit of Japanese "pearl fishing boats" to the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal, frequently, a few years before Great War II.

So, our defence are said to be, ~~at least as guaranteed verbally by our leaders to the Nation~~, capable of defending our sea-fronts and the land frontier against any threat to our security without our having to seek any foreign physical aid at all.

I wonder what percentage of our people and even what percentage our legislators do really and truly appreciate the following factors to have this complete "Defence" built u

1. The Time Factor.
2. The Financial Aspect.

I do not wish to go into details of these in this article ~~because it would cover pages of this great newspaper in which this article has been published.~~ But briefly as I see it, the "Time Factor" cannot be less than 5 to 7 years and perhaps more - and the "Financial Aspect" - I should haste to guess - however it cannot be less than one thousand crores or more. Where is the money going to come from?

Who are we building up the Defence against? - It is against China - our Enemy No 1. We have not made her this. but alas ! she has made this herself this by her unprovoked aggression of 1962.

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As I had said in one of my articles, some two years ago -China is said to have an army of over 3½ million - with a citizen force of some 30 million - she has the 3rd largest Air Force in the world - with possibly some of the latest type of M.I.Gs -outdating the M.I.G.s 21 which I believe we are in the throes in building in India. As far Naval strength, I do not know what she has but this I have heard just recently from a very important person of our ruling party who during his visit to China in 1957 was actually shown by a Chinese top leader - a dozen Submarines in Chinese Waters. He was told she was building 12 of these every year. At this rate she must have many more by now. And now she has added to her "Military Armoury", the Atom Bomb !!

With all this Military and Naval might of China - whose other even more destructive weapon she has in her favour -within our own country -the Fifth Columnists and pro-China elements -how can we, ~~with any stretch of imagination -except by a criminal sense of false pride -lull our innocent people to a feeling of smug safety by saying "We can defend our country with our own resources,"~~ -China will not wait for another 5 to 7 years -to resume her hostilities to give us time to build up our defence to match her might.

What about our food -our shelter -our hospitals -our schools - and a host of other essential amenities of life our millions have to have - and which they have not upto the measure they should have - and where are the crores and crores to come from? I believe we already have a national debt of over ₹ 8,500 crores.

It is not my intention to paint an alarming picture to the Nation. Why should I? ~~I have no political ambitions at all~~. I only want to see our Motherland remains intact with her millions enjoying a life of self-respect and dignity with everyone having the basic necessities of life provided. We cannot have this and build up our Defences to meet the Chinese threat on our own resources.

Almost every day in our Parliament in Delhi, our leaders are warning the Nation of Chinese massive military build up - at some vital parts of our Northern and North-East forntier, of China being busy constructing roads towards India -large Air Fields being constructed not far from our country, and of her Agents here. The danger to our Security both internal and external is, as I gather, from the statements of our leaders -serious and real.

How can we, in the circumstances, feel complacent about the whole show with the feeling that we have military resources of our own -strong enough to defend our Land ? I appeal and implore to the powers that be ~~have~~ to keep the Nation fully in the picture on Defence -without ofcourse divulging any information of secret nature for security reasons.

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China continues to be a real threat to our country and if she persuades some of our neighbouring countries to be "tools of hers" -to gain her own ends -we will have to be bold -come out in the open and say, "The talk of 'non-alignment' is, in the present context of the situation on our frontiers, quite out of date -we must seek foreign aid to supplement our defence forces physically to defend our frontiers". We cannot delay in this matter -unless ~~we are prepared to 'sell' our country to the Communist Imperialists~~ from China.

WHAT TO DO?

Who shall we ask for help? Let us go to countries who are real, sincere friends of India -whose political ideologies are the same as of ours. Incidentally, we cannot possibly embarrass our very great friend Russia - by asking her to come to our help to meet the Chinese threat -when we know that they are 'brothers' as has been frequently declared by many Russian leaders in the past. How can a brother help some one who fight ones own brother? It is not fair that we should cash in on Russian friendship and willingness to help us in our economic and industrial build up projects -to ask for any military aid. In this context, I wonder, if we have not caused some uneasiness to the U.S.S.R by our ~~having~~ persuaded her to help us establishing an M.I.G. factory in India with Russian 'know-how' and Russian equipment. How can Russia help us to expand our Air Force which is being expanded solely to take on China her "brother" if and when a war is forced on us by China on her own initiative.

ACTION TO TAKE

Here is my suggestion:

1 Let us now make a clean breast of it -~~and giving up our false sense of pride and prejudice~~, go to our Western 'Brothers' who are truly willing to help. Their help will come, I'm sure, in gigantic shape -if they are convinced that we are "batting on their side". In asking for this help, we need not feel obliged to toe the line with them in any "Military Pacts". Any how, without being dragged into any military pact -with our Western Brothers who may come to our help -if we asked for it -we certainly would not remain as silent spectators if we find Democracies are being bullied by Totalitarians. Asking for this help will NOT in any way prejudice our Sovereigty

2 Let us go to our friendly Nuclear Powers in the West soon and request them to plan for immediate provision of a "Nuclear Umbrella" for us and perhaps to our neighbouring countries too, against the Chinese Nuclear Threat -which incidentally, in the long run might be a threat to themselves too.

3 Let us seek immediate Western Aid -for our Air build up- but we must give up every vestige of our plan to shape Air strength on Russian methods and Russian technical help. We just cannot have both -even if Russia may not object to our getting Western advice and help too.

Note: The recent call as reported in the press.- by Russia to China to join hands with her to fight the "American Imperialists in Viet Nam is a factor we cannot lightly "overlook".

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4. The Nation has got to be made 'Military-minded' and not 'War-minded' as I have often said. For years, I have been advocating compulsory military training to all able-bodied young men of ages 20 to 30 years. Let us take this up now.

5. Private Industries must be encouraged to manufacture our Defence equipment in a big way. Our Industrialists are quite capable persons whom we can entrust with responsibilities to manufacture and deliver all the goods we want for war purposes as they did in Great War II.

6. Let us train our people living all along our sea and land frontiers upto a depth of some 5/10 miles from our frontiers in Guerrilla Warfare. The cost and the task involved in this will be, I know, formidable, but the dividend to the Nation will, indeed, be very high. I do not know how many of our I.N.A. Officers are today physically fit and available. They could be usefully employed in giving this Guerilla warfare training to the civilians on our frontiers

We must act on the lines suggested and soon. Let 'non-alignment' and 'non-violence' be only memories of our ideologies in the past but today let us rise to the occasion in the context of the repeated warnings of our Prime Minister and of our Defence Minister of the Chinese Threat and get 'aligned' with friendly Military Powers to co-operate with us physically in the defence of India against the threats of the resumption of hostilities by China. There is no time to waste.
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The security of our innocent millions is in danger. It is the sacred ~~and indispensible~~ duty of our Government to provide for their security and this security can be well provided if we give up our 'non-alignment' policy and ask for help from friendly powers. ~~We want strength for peace.~~